

the forum

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Come to the Fair— Prepared!

Job fairs are a great way to shop for new job opportunities, network, and make personal contacts with recruiters at various organizations. Here are some techniques recommended by experts to ensure that your performance at the fair doesn't turn into a circus:

Do some scouting.

If you've never been to a job fair, attend the next one that comes to your city for observational purposes. Pay attention to recruiters and fellow job seekers to pick up some pointers on how to dress, how to approach a company's booth appropriately, and how to successfully work the room.

Do some research.

Find out which companies will be represented and learn about them in advance through corporate websites or other tools. The more you know, the more you can converse with the company representative in the booth and the more memorable you will be. You will also appear much more professional than unprepared job seekers who make the mistake of starting off their conversations with company representatives by asking, "What does your company do?"

Deliver your key messages quickly.


Interviewers are very busy, so don't waste their time. Work on a "sound bite" that says what your skills are, the type of work that interests you, and the kind of company with which you want to associate.

Plan some questions.

If you have additional time, be ready to ask intelligent questions. Ask how departments are organized and how your skills might be utilized within the framework of the company. Also show you know something about the company by asking questions about a recent product release, acquisition, or other relevant news. And make sure to ask the interviewer what he or she likes best about the corporate culture to better assess if this company is right for you.

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Get the interviewer's business card.

If an interview goes well, you will want to follow up with a letter that reinforces the points you made and the facts you learned. If you made a good impression at the fair, the interviewer probably has made a note to that effect and will remember that you passed his or her on-site screen.

Take advantage of the obvious.

Sometimes recruiters will post job openings at their booth and provide written information. Grab all of the information you can on site before you get in line for an interview so you won't waste precious time discussing the obvious.

Dress appropriately.

You are going to a job interview, so dress the part. Break out the business attire and shine your shoes. It's better to err on the side of the conservative than to be too casual.

Show your pearly whites.

Smile when you meet the interviewer. Give a firm handshake. (If you are prone to sweaty palms, bring a handkerchief to use as a towel.) Keep breath mints on hand and make eye contact.

Be organized.

Bring plenty of résumés with you. Keep them in a nice folder so you don't get fingerprints all over them. Have a notebook for memos to yourself.

Avoid the shopping spree.

Many companies give out freebies at their booths. It's OK to pick up an item or two, but don't leave the impression that you are shopping. The main impression you want to make is that you are very interested and very qualified for a job.

Keep lively.

The lines may be daunting, but don't fail to maximize this opportunity. Talk to every company that fits your experience and ambitions. If you meet with 20 recruiters, at the end of the day you will know 20 people by name. That sure beats sending a blind résumé to "Personnel Director."

Source: Kate Lorenz, CareerBuilder.com





Internships for High School Students

Internships are one of the most important ways students gain experience and start to make contacts within their field. College students hold most of the available internships but more opportunities are now available for high school students looking to get valuable work experience.

Why intern in high school?

The idea of pursuing an internship probably doesn't cross most high school students' minds, which is an excellent reason to pursue one. Work experience at a respected company or organization, especially if it's related to a field you might pursue in college, will only strengthen your college applications. It's a great way to stand out from the crowd.

Secondly, an internship will allow you to explore potential careers and courses of study for college. You might confirm that newspaper journalism is the career of your dreams, or find out that software programming isn't exactly how you'd imagined it. You may also discover other fields and positions you hadn't considered before.

Finally, an internship can help you understand how a professional organization operates. Within that organization you'll gain access to valuable contacts who may lead you to other opportunities as you progress through school.

Where to find an internship?

Some organizations like Microsoft, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Smithsonian have formal internship programs designed for high school students. Typically, these programs are limited to students in the region. Research companies in the industry that interests you and check their websites for opportunities.

Internships are not just available with large corporations in urban areas either. Often local newspapers, museums, and other businesses will offer internship opportunities. Start asking around at local business associations to see what is available in your community.

Don't give up if these companies don't formally list an internship program for high school students. Try to identify a human resource representative or department manager to whom you can send an e-mail or letter. Ask your parents, your friends' parents, your relatives, and anyone else who might be willing to help you if they're aware of any opportunities. Contact professional organizations in your area of interest.

How to apply

Companies with formal internship programs generally have specific procedures outlined on their websites. If you're trying to create your own opportunity, craft a one-page résumé that outlines your skills, education, and interests along with a cover letter that explains your interest in their organization.

Source: Stephen Borkowski, www.fastweb.com



Summer Job Hunting 101

Find out how a part-time or hourly summer job can offer training wheels to your dream career

Sooner than later, the lines at your local fast food joints will be filled with more summer job seekers than hungry customers. Mallrats will be replaced by well-mannered students with résumés in hand. And your parents will begin a steady, annoying cadence that will only end when you've got a place to finally stamp your timecard:

"Have you found a job yet... Have you found a job yet? Have you found a job yet?!?"

Well, have you?

Sure, you can choose to diss the job search all together, and spend the summer bored, broke, and having to do mom and dad's laundry every morning just to pass the time. But that's just awkward for everyone.

In other words, you need a part-time/hourly summer job. And in order to beat the flood of slackers that will spill onto the 'Net and into stores once we work our way into June, you need to start looking now. According to a recent Junior Achievement summer jobs survey, more than 85 percent of students ages 15 and older plan on looking for jobs. And if you do the quick math, you'll realize not everyone is going to get their first choice of jobs (or second, or third). Someone is digging ditches, but that someone doesn't have to be you.

So, here are a few tips to make sure you're not stuck folding dad's boxer shorts in the middle of July.

Have realistic summer job expectations

Everyone has that one friend with the dream summer job—the one who makes more than you, works less, and seemingly possesses an unlimited amount of sick days. (And by sick days, we mean days spent tanning by the pool while reading a copy of *US Weekly*). It may seem like that friend has won the summer job lottery, and we don't want to be the fun police, but what is he/she really learning? Even if a summer job may not appear to be the yellow brick road to your dream career, you'd be surprised at what you can take away from the right seasonal job.

Here are a few ideas of how some summer jobs can lend credible experience to your future dream job...

Cashier: Investment banker

Before you start investing millions of dollars belonging to Fortune 500 big wigs, you're going to need to master making change for a \$20 purchase. And those pesky penny rolls are a pain to break open.

Arts & crafts retail store stockperson: Designer to the stars

It's doubtful that designing a dress for the Oscar red carpet walk will require you to know which kind of glue works best for attaching googly eyes onto pipe cleaners. But such a job can be the first rung on the ladder to establishing that prized and posh skill set.

Camp counselor: Professional coach, athlete, or trainer

Making sure that a dozen rug rats playing dodgeball don't deliver each other black eyes is a good warm-up for

playing with the big boys and girls. Here you can hone your understanding of game fundamentals and polish your locker room communication without worrying about upsetting any big league prima donnas.

Pizza delivery driver: Musician

Hear us out first! Carpooling pizzas in your hatchback through strange neighborhoods at a responsible speed may not be the same as doing an acoustic set at the House of Blues, but answer us this: How many other jobs let you listen to any music you want to, as loud as you want to (without headphones)? That's what we thought.



Sound advice

Job hunting and workplace clichés are a dime a dozen—see? You’ve probably heard to “dress for the job you want, not the one you have” or to “work outside the box.” As annoying as these are to hear—and as hard as that pesky “box” is to find—clichés serve a purpose in that there’s usually a meaningful nugget of truth at the core of each. Conversely, the time to serve up clichés is not during a job interview. When speaking with a potential employer, be candid but be careful. Likewise, be yourself but be sure to filter out the just plain weird stuff (your potential employer doesn’t need to know about your boy band fan club), and be one more thing...

Be honest with potential employers

This starts with being honest with yourself. If you’re a proud vegan who isn’t sure you could stand handling meat patties and prime-cut filets all day, then skip the restaurant summer job route. Being honest also includes your initial conversations with potential bosses. Don’t over-commit to the amount of hours you’ll be able to work up front and then back down. Also, don’t claim you possess certain skills and experiences if you don’t. We know it’s exciting to be on the cusp of landing a job, but the quickest way to crash and burn in your new gig is by fibbing.

Don’t be “that guy” or “that girl”

When dozens and dozens of your peers are vying for the same coveted job, don’t make it easy for a potential employer to take you out of the running early. From having crass cell phone ring tones blowing up during an interview to dropping off a résumé while wearing a tuxedo T-shirt, the list of these embarrassing faux pas is long. When in doubt, pause, then exercise a little common sense.

Source: Mike Ward, snagajob.com

People Are Asking . . .

What is FastWeb!

For more than ten years, FastWeb has been the trusted online leader for scholarships. It is the nation’s largest source of local, national, and college-specific scholarships. FastWeb offers personalized scholarship matching. You will be able to search and compare colleges that are right for you and find colleges with scholarship money. There are tools and tips to help you pay for college, and you will be able to find jobs and internships.

Start your search today at fastweb.com/fastweb/scholarships/signup and find out how fast and easy it is to pay for your college education!!

Source: www.fastweb.com

First Job Tips for Teens



You're young. You're inexperienced. But you want a job. Here's how...

Landing your first job can be tricky. How do you gain experience if an employer won't hire you due to lack of experience? Should you settle for a low-paying job just to get a foot in the door? How high should you set your expectations for a first-time job?

These tips will help you find the best possible first-time job, given your age and lack of work experience:

Know what you're getting into

Whether you're looking for teen jobs, high school jobs, or college jobs, it's important to have realistic expectations about your first job. After all, you are just entering a job market in which many others have been operating for quite some time. Don't get discouraged, but know what to expect. Talk with a school guidance counselor, your parents, or others who have been there. They can provide valuable insight into the reality of the working world. Be prepared with a list of questions so you get the kind of information you need to find your first job.

Be prepared

Before looking for a job, learn everything you can about the job search process. SnagAJob.com has lots of educational articles to help you. The Internet is a treasure-trove of information about job hunting, labor laws for teenagers, and information about companies. You can often get a feel for companies by visiting their websites. We've broken down some of the more popular jobs for teens in our 'JobBuddies' section.

Spread the word

Many jobs come through referrals from people you know, so it's important to let everyone know you're looking for a job. This is where your parents and their friends, teachers, coaches, and other adults can be a great resource. Be sure to mention the kind of work you'd like to do, but don't turn down an opportunity just because it's not the perfect job. It might lead to the job you really want.

Work for the experience

Sometimes a job might not be exactly what you're looking for, but it puts you in contact with people or organizations that might help you in the future. For example, working as an office clerk might not be the most exciting first job, but it might enable you to shadow someone in a job that interests you. Also, don't be too quick to turn down a volunteer position as your first job. Sometimes the best compensation is experience or access—and future employers look at any work experience as valuable.

Consider your options

Don't limit yourself to your dream job or to the first job that comes along. Broaden your thinking to include as many options as possible. Start with your interests and consider all the possibilities. If you like working with animals, jobs might include working at a zoo, an animal shelter, or a veterinarian. But what about providing a dog-walking service or taking care of pets while their owners are on vacation? If you like working with computers, you might not get hands-on experience in your first job, but what about a position that gives you access to IT professionals or helps you learn the latest software?

Stick with it

Don't give up if you can't find a job right away. A job search takes persistence and patience. It's important to keep trying; a potential employer will notice if you have the determination and the drive to find a job.

Source: snagajob.com



Websites for Local Part-time and Summer Jobs

Kings Dominion: <http://www.kingsdominion.com/jobs/jobs.cfm>

Part time jobs in Richmond:
<http://www.groovejob.com/browse/jobs/in/VA/Virginia/Richmond>

Greater Richmond Job Seeker Service—Youth Services: <http://www.careerconnect.state.va.us/910greaterrichmond/jobseeker/youth.htm>

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Item	Description	Quantity
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Job Interview Pocket Résumé	Small tri-fold reference résumé that fits in a wallet or pocket	
Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Guide to Information on Careers (MAGIC)	Contains information on education, job training, job-seeking, and careers—Minimal fee charged for orders outside of Virginia—also available on the VEC website*	
Virginia Business Resource Directory	How to start your own business—also available on the VEC website*	Hard copy
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Virginia Job Outlook	Brochure with top occupations, growth rate, and annual average salaries by educational attainment—also available on the VEC website*	
Display Posters	Skills Needed for Success in the Workplace—24"x18"	
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	Interview Tips—18"x 24"	
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	Fastest-Growing Occupations, U.S. Data	
	Sample Application Form	
	Ten Most-Wanted Skills	
	Education Pays...	
Available only on the VEC website*		
Virginia Labor Market Information Directory	Listing and description of VEC publications, products, special services, and data delivery systems—reference material only	
Occupational Wage Data Report: 2005	Reference material only for: United States Statewide, Virginia Local Workforce Investment Areas Virginia Metropolitan Wage Data (MSAs) Occupational Employment Statistical Regions Planning Districts	

*VaEmploy.Com

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Virginia Employment Commission

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